

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE SENIOR CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO WORK ACT

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 20, 1995

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the introduction of the Senior Citizen's Right to Work Act of 1995. This bill provides long-awaited relief for America's working seniors. By passing this bill, Congress fulfills the pledge we made just 3 short weeks ago to lift the Social Security earnings limit by the end of 1995.

That pledge was:

Whereas the House of Representatives has overwhelmingly passed legislation to raise the exempt amount under the Social Security earnings limit three times, in 1989, 1992, and 1995;

Whereas such legislation is a key provision of the Contract With America;

Whereas the President in his 1992 campaign document, "Putting People First" pledged to lift the Social Security earnings limit; and

Whereas the Social Security earnings limit is a depression-era relic that unfairly punishes working seniors: Now, Therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That it is the intent of Congress that legislation will be passed before the end of 1995 to raise the Social Security earnings limit for working seniors aged 65 through 69 in a manner which will ensure the financial integrity of the Social Security Trust Funds and will be consistent with the goal of achieving a balanced budget in seven years.

The unfair earnings limit penalizes low- and middle-income seniors who need to work. The earnings limit takes away \$1 of every \$3 a senior earns over the limit. In 1995, this limit is a mere \$11,280. This bill will lift the level to \$14,000 in 1996 and up to \$30,000 by 2002. If current law remains in effect, the \$14,000 threshold won't be hit until 2002.

Working seniors don't have pension income or stocks and bonds tucked away. They never had the chance to save and invest. And yet, they get hit with a marginal tax rate of 56 percent when they exceed the limit—nearly twice the rate millionaires pay. But those seniors who do live off investment income are not impacted by the earnings limit.

Folks, this is just not right. America's working seniors should not be punished just because they never had money to tuck away and must now keep working to make ends meet. It is time to remove the penalty on seniors who need to keep working.

I want to commend my friend, Representative BUNNING, who has done yeoman's work to bring this issue to the fore. Even though we know working seniors will pay more into our economy and more than offset the costs associated with lifting the earnings limit, the Congressional Budget Office will not allow this "dynamic" method of scoring. Thus, Mr. BUNNING has put together a proposal that meets the CBO's budget rules.

The House Ways and Means Committee will be considering this legislation tomorrow. And soon after, the Congress will consider this bill on the floor.

We promised working seniors that we would provide relief before the end of the year, and we're going to keep that promise. Working seniors across America can trust Congress to deliver relief when they need it most. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this bill today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 20, 1995

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained during rollcall vote No. 810, the vote on the rule to H.R. 2491, the Balanced Budget Act. I would like the record to reflect that I would have voted "no".

THE NATIONAL PARKS AND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEMS FREEDOM ACT OF 1995

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 20, 1995

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today, along with a number of my distinguished colleagues, including JIM HANSEN, JIM SAXTON, KEN CALVERT, and J.D. HAYWORTH, the National Parks and National Wildlife Refuge Systems Freedom Act of 1995.

The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that our national parks and wildlife refuges are not closed in the future because of a lack of Federal funding to operate them.

During this past weekend, we witnessed the sad spectacle of the Department of the Interior closing our Nation's 369 parks and 504 national wildlife refuge units.

These lands, which comprise about 181 million acres, were acquired through the hard work of millions of American taxpayers, who paid for them with entrance fees, excise taxes, duck stamps, and income tax payments.

It is terribly wrong to close these facilities and to deny the American people the right to enjoy their beauty, splendor, and various recreational opportunities.

In the State of Arizona, Governor Fife Symington offered to operate and keep the Grand Canyon open by using the State National Guard personnel. Regrettably, the Governor's request was denied because the Department of the Interior currently lacks the legal authority to allow the States to manage these lands.

The National Parks and National Wildlife Refuge Systems Freedom Act will require the Secretary of the Interior to accept the services

of State employees to operate any parks or refuge units when the Federal Government is in a period of a budgetary shutdown.

Under the terms of my bill, a State would not be forced to operate any park or refuge within its geographic boundaries, but would simply be given the opportunity to offer their services, like Governor Symington.

Furthermore, the term "government budgetary shutdown" has been narrowly defined to only cover those circumstances when there is a failure to enact a timely appropriations bill for the Department of the Interior and there is a lack of temporary or continuing appropriation funds.

Mr. Speaker, our national parks and wildlife refuge systems must never be closed again in the future. This legislation will ensure that if there is ever another budgetary meltdown, the American people will not be denied the chance to visit the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, Yellowstone National Park, or the Washington Monument.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in support of the National Parks and National Wildlife Refuge Systems Freedom Act of 1995.

THE DAMAGE TO FEDERAL WORKERS

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 20, 1995

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, there have been articles written and statements made suggesting that since furloughed Federal workers are being paid that somehow they came out ahead in this shutdown ordeal.

I find this kind of rhetoric highly offensive and an affront to the hundreds of thousands of hard-working, dedicated Federal workers who were furloughed through no fault of their own.

How do individuals come out ahead after being demoralized with the label of "non-essential?" How do individuals come out ahead after their lives were put on hold because of political posturing? How do individuals come out ahead after they have witnessed actions that could have jeopardized their jobs and their future?

Mr. Speaker, the truth is that they cannot. No Federal worker, and I want to say this again, no Federal worker in my district or anywhere in this country said, "Please, please furlough me." In fact, I know that a number of furloughed Federal workers continued to work at home, realizing the importance of their work and their commitment to this country, even if others had forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we learned a valuable lesson from this experience, and I hope that we begin serious consideration of a long-term plan to prevent this from ever happening again. Then, and only then, can we say America and Federal workers came out ahead.

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